the Richmond Review

December 2023 RichmondSunsetNews.com FREE

Suspects Arrested in GG Park Corpse Case

By John Ferrannini

The San Francisco district attorney's office has opted not to file charges – at least, not yet – against two people who were arrested in connection with the death of a San Francisco resident whose body was discovered in Golden Gate Park during the Outside Lands festival last summer.

Alexander Madden, 26, and Emilia Beckhusen, 33, were arrested on Nov. 2 and Nov. 4, respectively, according to a news release from the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD).

The three-day Outside Lands Music and Arts Festival brings a couple of hundred thousand people to the park on San Francisco's west side every summer. It was winding down on Aug. 13 when officers responded to a report of "an unresponsive adult female" in the area of Fulton Street and 22nd Avenue.

"Officers summoned medics to the scene. Paramedics from the San Francisco Fire Department responded, and the victim was declared deceased at the scene," the statement said.

The death was declared suspicious by the City's medical examiner, who later ruled the cause of death undetermined. The woman was identified as 37-year-old San Francisco resident Kelly Koike.

Investigators zeroed in on Madden and Beckhusen as suspects – at least in the disposal of Koike's body. On Nov. 2, Madden was arrested on a Ramey warrant for unlawful disposal of human remains and conspiracy.

Two days later, Beckhusen was also arrested on a Ramey warrant for unlawful disposal of human remains and conspiracy.

A Ramey warrant is a type of arrest warrant issued before the district attorney's office has filed formal charges. Typi-

Continued on page 12

INSIDE

Alexandria Theatre: A Message of Hope Page 12
From the Editor Page 4
Lowell's Admissions Page 5
Announcements Page 10
'Then and Now' Page 13

Balboa Theater Hosts First Sensory-Friendly Movie

In Partnership with SF Rec. and Park's Therapeutic Rec. and Inclusion Services

By Beth Lederer

San Francisco Recreation and Park's Therapeutic Recreation and Inclusion Services division hosted its first sensory-friendly movie on Nov. 4 at the Balboa Theater in the Outer Richmond for children, teens and young adults who signed up for Therapeutic Recreation Family Day.

The Therapeutic division rented out the entire Balboa Theater for a private showing for those with disabilities and their families. A free screening of Disney's animated "Strange World" was presented in a stress-free and relaxing atmosphere with lights dimmed, lowered sound and large subtitles.

It's hard to imagine hav-

Continued on page 14

Dalia Guimaraes (left) with daughter Bianca at the Nov. 4 sensory-friendly screening of "Strange World" at the Balboa Theater. It was Bianca's first time in a movie theater. *Photo by Beth Lederer.*

Proposed Light Show in GG Park Alarms Environmentalists

By Thomas K. Pendergast

Local environmentalists are highlighting concerns about a proposal to light up the Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park at night during the winter months and the impact this may have on plants and wildlife.

Bringing night lighting to the garden is the brainchild of the Gardens of Golden Gate Park (GGGP), a public-private partnership between the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department and the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society, which jointly operate the Conservatory of Flowers, Japanese Tea Garden and San Francisco Botanical Garden.

A request for proposals (RFP) issued on Oct. 12 "seeks to develop a high quality and unique winter lights installation … intended to drive members and visitation to the gardens after regular admission hours, from mid-November 2024 through early January 2025. The Gardens are also open to multi-year proposals."

The deadline to submit proposals was Nov. 15 and, as of press time, the Gardens expect to select a proposal by Nov. 29.

"We received six proposals," the GGGP's Director of Advancement Brendan Lange said in an email. "The selection committee is reviewing the proposals and will make a decision and let the proposed partner know by Dec. 1."

"The Gardens' staff leadership team, in consultation with the Recreation and Park Department, decided to issue the RFP," he said. "The partner selection will go to the nonprofit's board on Nov. 30 and a more detailed plan and proposal at a later date. The Gardens' staff leadership team voted unanimously to put out a request for proposal to learn more about a potential winter lights exhibit at the Gardens."

According to the RFP, GGGP and the selected "contract partner" will work to create "an iconic garden experience and memorable winter destination for San Francisco, the Bay Area and beyond. The contract partner will create an evening garden experience, illuminating existing plants

Continued on page 7

New 'Botticelli Drawings' Exhibit Featured at Legion

By Noma Faingold

"Botticelli Drawings," the newest exhibition at San Francisco's Legion of Honor, is not going for the obvious in exploring the work of the Italian painter of the early Renaissance, Sandro Botticelli (full name: Alessandro di Mariano di Vanni Filippa). Viewers won't see his most iconic painting, "The Birth of Venus" (1485-1486). Nor will they be disappointed.

The ambitious show, which opened Nov. 19 and runs through Feb. 11, 2024, has more scholarly goals.

"In this stunning and groundbreaking exhibition, the majority of Botticelli's graphic output takes us below the surface of his paintings to illuminate the artist's creative process, from conception and development to final execution," said Thomas P. Campbell, director and CEO of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (FAMSF).

Furio Rinaldi, FAMSF's curator of Drawings and Prints, at the entrance of the "Botticelli Drawings" exhibit at the Legion of Honor. *Photo by Noma Faingold.*

"Botticelli Drawings" is the brainchild of Furio Rinaldi, FAMSF's curator of Drawings and Prints and an expert on Italian 15th and 16th century artwork. He has been working on his concept, which involved gathering of fragile drawings and related paintings (60 works) for three years from 39 lending institutions. It is the first exhibition to dive into the role that drawing played in Botticelli's methods of creating elaborate paintings.

"Reuniting all these works from so many different institutions was kind of challenging," Rinaldi said. "However, I was heartened by the immediate responses that we had from many key lenders, who understood the novelty of the project, the scholarly resonance and the unprecedented nature of it."

The seven sections of "Botticelli Drawings" are presented in chronological order of Botticelli's life (1445-1510). Startling larger-than-life images of drawings are projected like a slide show at the entrance to the galleries.

"We want to welcome audiences with these projections. It tunes the viewer's eye to that level of detail – to the lines and the pictorial qualities of Botticelli's drawings and design," Rinaldi said. "It's kind of like entering Botticelli's mind through his graphic imagination."

Born in Florence, Botticelli began his career as a teenager as a workshop apprentice for early Renaissance master Filippo Lippi. As his career progressed, Botticelli became best known for frescos at the Sistine Chapel, as well as a portrait artist and specializing in works featuring religious and mythological subjects.

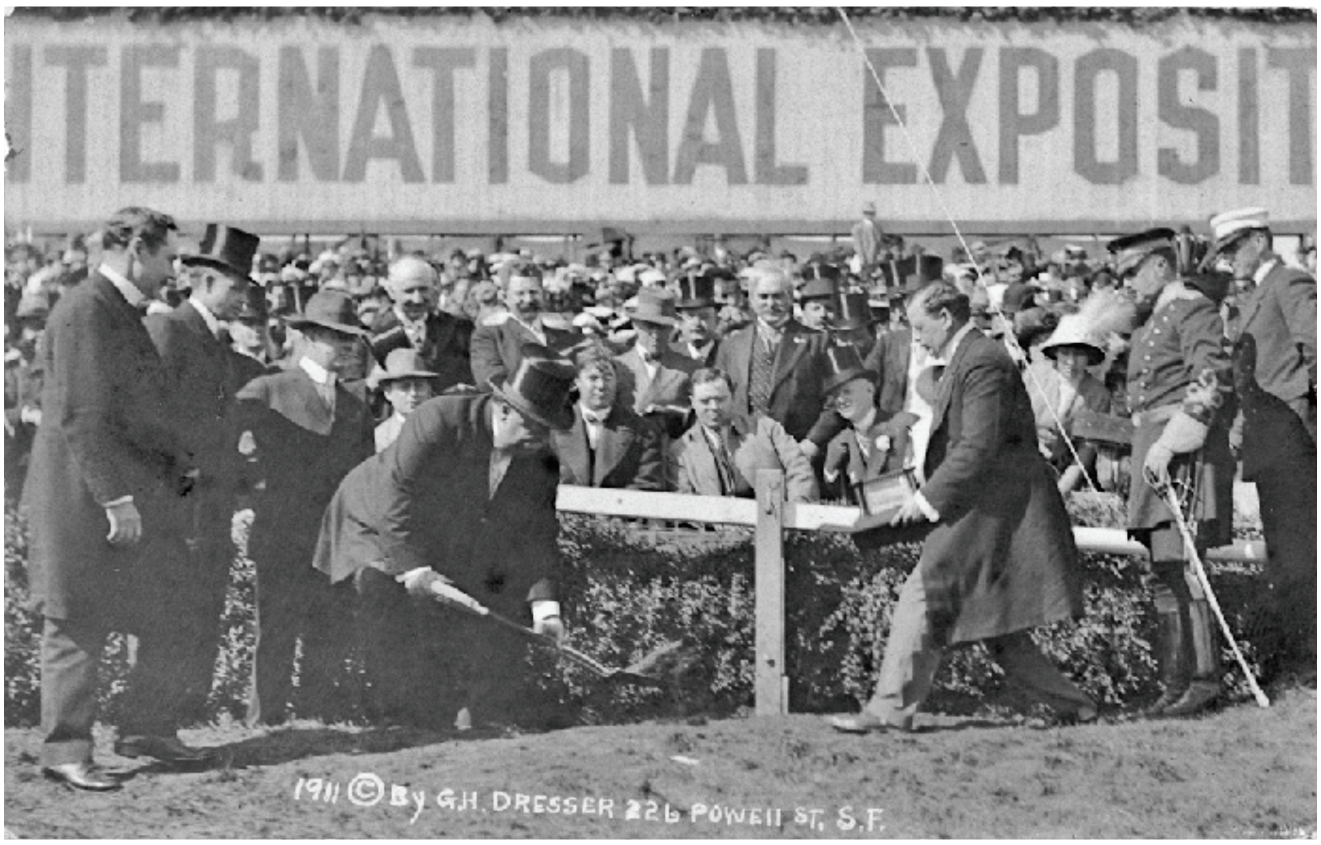
Later, his career went to a severe place when he became a follower of powerful Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola, who preached repressive dogma in Florence from 1490

Continued on page 4

Looking Back

Kinen Carvala

Pan-Pacific Expo


INTERNATIONAL EXPOSIT
1911 © By G.H. DRESSER 226 POWELL ST. S.F.

Panama-Pacific International Exposition groundbreaking, 1911. President William Howard Taft ceremonially turns over the first shovel of earth at the Polo Field in Golden Gate Park. ***Photo courtesy of a Private Collector; Western Neighborhoods Project/OpenSFHistory.***

How could the organizer behind one successful canal fail at building another?

Oct. 14, 1911, was planned to be a celebration at the Polo Field in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. Despite the damage suffered by the City in the 1906 earthquake and fire, the City was determined to celebrate its rebirth by hosting the upcoming Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in 1915.

The exposition was a celebration not only for San Francisco, but also for the United States which was set to succeed in constructing the Panama Canal, which would shave 5,200 miles off of ships' voyages between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans by cutting through Central America and avoiding going around the southern tip of South America.

French diplomat Ferdinand de Lesseps's plan to connect the Mediterranean and Red Seas led to the sea-level Suez Canal opening in 1869. He planned for another sea-level canal through Panama, then part of Colombia, though his success in the flat Egyptian desert was not repeated in the mountainous Panamanian jungle, according to the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

With at least 20,000 construction workers dead and countless others incapacitated from tropical diseases, like yellow fever and malaria, the French attempt to construct the Panama Canal was abandoned in 1889, according to the Harvard Library.

On Feb. 15, 1898, the American naval ship USS Maine exploded while visiting the Spanish colony of Cuba. The U.S. thought that Spain was behind the explosion, leading to the Spanish-American War.

The USS Oregon left San Francisco for a 67-day voyage around South America to reach the Caribbean and to defeat Spain in the Battle of Santiago near Cuba, according to the U.S. Army publication "The Panama Canal: An Army's Enterprise."

The Spanish-American War spurred the U.S. to consider building a transoceanic canal through Central America to reduce transit time between America's coasts, according to historian Dr. Heather M. Haley. The Philippines were transferred from Spain to the U.S. in the Treaty of Paris signed on Dec. 10, 1898, which resolved the Spanish-American War.

In 1903, the U.S. helped Panama gain independence from Colombia; the U.S. and Panama signed the 1903 Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty so the U.S. could build the Panama Canal and control a five-mile zone on either side of the canal. William Howard Taft, an American circuit court judge, reluctantly agreed in 1900 to oversee an American legal system being implemented in the Philippines at the behest of President William McKinley, with the promise that McKinley would later appoint Taft to the Supreme Court, according to "The Bully Pulpit" by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

McKinley was assassinated in September 1901 (covered in a February 2021 "Looking Back" column) and successor President Theodore Roosevelt added Taft to his cabinet as secretary of war in 1904 (akin to the modern secretary of defense). Roosevelt also had Taft supervise the Second Isthmian Canal Commission (created in 1904) for constructing the Panama Canal.

The Commission limited disease spread caused by mosquitos by draining still water, cutting grass and applying pesticides, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Instead of a canal at sea level throughout, Taft agreed to a Panama Canal with locks and dams, using water from a dammed river to fill a section of the canal to raise boats above sea level and then draining water to lower boats, according to "The Panama Canal: An Army's Enterprise."

When Taft came for the 1911 groundbreaking of the PPIE, he had been involved with the canal commission for years before becoming president in 1909. Taft was not the only politician at the groundbreaking; California Gov. Hiram Johnson, San Francisco Mayor Patrick Henry McCarthy and mayor-elect James "Sunny Jim" Rolph Jr. also attended, along with 100,000 other people, according to the SF Chronicle.

The Panama Canal officially opened on Aug. 15, 1914, just days after U.S. President Woodrow Wilson declared the U.S. neutral (initially) in the European conflict that became World War I. The PPIE celebrating the Panama Canal officially opened on Feb. 20, 1915, and San Francisco Mayor Rolph led a public march to the exposition grounds in the Marina District, according to the essay, "Mayor Rolph and the Panama-Pacific International Exposition," by William Issel and Robert Cherny; planners decided not to have the PPIE spread out across the City, according to PPIE historian Frank Morton Todd.

San Francisco Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin recently compared the PPIE to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) 2023 summit as another international event hosted by San Francisco after suffering through the COVID-19 pandemic in a SF Chronicle article by J.D. Morris published Sept. 20.

After Taft lost the 1912 presidential election, he became a law professor at Yale. Taft was appointed chief justice of the Supreme Court by President William Harding in 1921 before Taft resigned in 1930 due to heart trouble, according to "The Bully Pulpit."

The Philippines became independent from the U.S. in 1946.

In 1977, the U.S. and Panama signed two treaties to transfer control of the Panama Canal and surrounding area to Panama.

The Panama Canal handles about 5% of seaborne trade, though recent drought conditions have reduced the amount of water available for the canal's locks, lowering the number of ships that can use the canal, according to Peter Eavis writing for the New York Times.

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December 2023 – Volume 36, #3
P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116 ph: 415-706-6428
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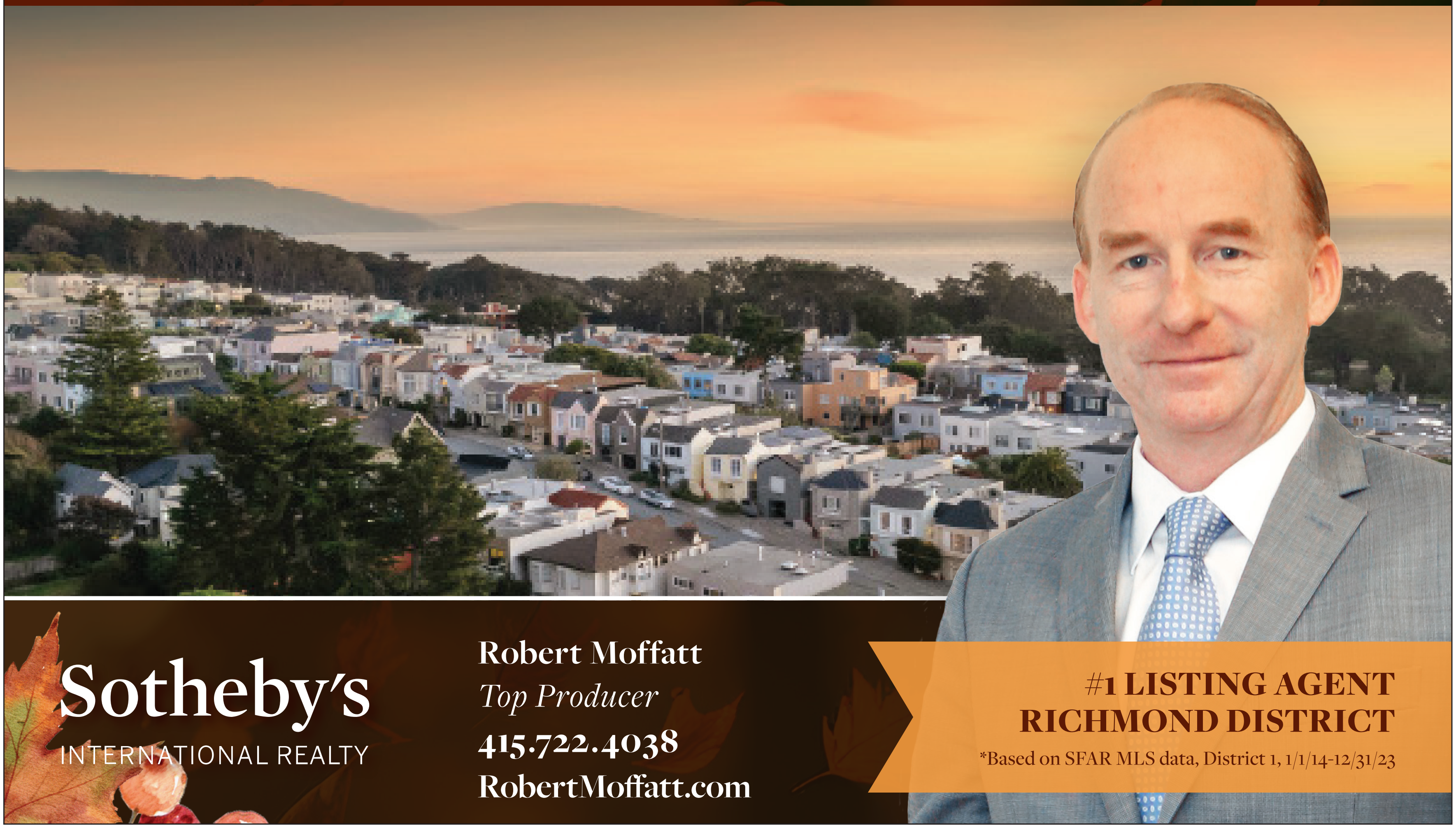


From the Editor

Michael Durand

I had a lot to be thankful for this past Thanksgiving. Not the least of which was suviving a massive heart attack on Oct. 18!

I wrote all about my ordeal in an online-only version of "From the Editor." If you'd like to know the details, go to RichmondSunsetNews.com to read about my near-death experience.

The bottom line is, the amazing medical professionals at Kaiser Permanente saved my life. They told me if I hadn't gone to the emergency room that afternoon, I would not have been alive the next morning.

I will be forever grateful to the impressively skillful doctors, nurses and medical staff. Thanks to them, I'm feeling much better and I'm back at my desk creating new editions of our beloved neighborhood newspapers.

It's time to make a special mention of thanks to Paul Kozakiewicz, the previous editor and publisher – and the founder – of the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers. While I was confined to a bed with tubes and wires and oxygen and all manner of medical devices, Paul stepped up and took over for me. He is responsible for meeting the deadlines for the November issues. He really went above and beyond to keep the presses rolling and I am grateful beyond words.

The papers are Paul's "babies." He started them three decades ago and pushed out every issue for 30 years until I took over about five years ago. He still helps proofread and copy edit the issues every month and I consider myself to be very fortunate to "co-parent" the papers with him.

Gabriela, a.k.a. GabJo

My messages of gratitude continue with thanks to Gabi Perez (gabjoart on Instagram), one of our Patreon supporters (along with her partner Kayce Basques).

The three of us met up for a drink on Clement Street a while back. Gabi is a talented graphic artist. She offered her services to help us get the word out about our Patreon account. Patreon is like GoFundMe, except it is an ongoing funding tool that accepts donations monthly.

I encourage our faithful readers to help support the paper with a small donation each month. Gabi's cartoon (right) imagines two Richmond Review fans wondering where the paper went (in some distopian future without the community newspaper). "They didn't have enough Patrons."

Thank you so much, Gabi!

Police Blotter

This is the second issue of the Richmond Review without the Police Blotter column. We know it's one of our readers' favorite features and we received many emails and phone calls asking about its sudden departure.

We usually get the information from the Richmond Station. I contacted Capt. Chris Canning and asked about the status of the breakdown of police activity every month. Here is his reply:

"I understand the frustration," Canning said. "I'm sure you're aware of our SFPD staffing challenges. All available resources have been placed on patrol/uniformed assignments, including a significant number of my administrative staff that previously handled these tasks. Remaining staff have absorbed the responsibility, but capacity limitations have had a direct impact. Please continue to expect to receive updates. They will be distributed at an interval we can support with our current resources."

We hope to see the Police Blotter back in action again soon. Thank you to the hard-working officers who serve to protects us!

Even More Sincere Thanks

On Thanksgiving I posted on our Facebook page (SF Richmond Review) how much I appreciate everyone in this newspaper's orbit: "Happy Thanksgiving! We warmly appreciate our advertisers, Patreon supporters, donors, writers, photographers, columnists, contributors, cartoonists, editors, printers, delivery crew, the businesses and organizations that help distribute the papers and, of course, our loyal readers. We love our community and are very thankful to live and work on San Francisco's west side. Love and good health to all."

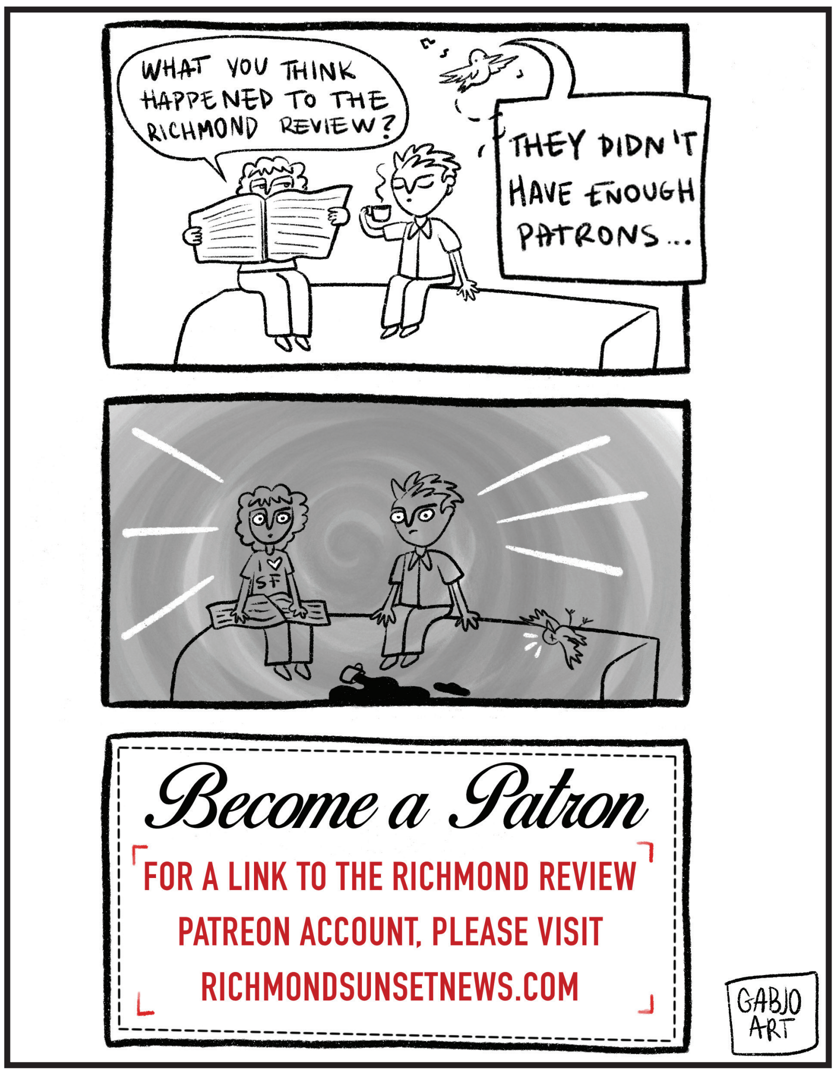
All true and sincere.

I also want to thank the many friends who kindly sent words of concern and care regarding my medical adventures. I even heard from people I've never met wishing me good health and a full recovery. Please know that every one of your messages were like little bandaids on my damaged heart. I am very grateful to our community for all the good people out there who truly love and care for one another.

You may notice that we tend toward publising stories about the good parts of our lives out here near the Pacific. We are proud of our neighborhood and work to support our community as much as we can. I am happy to play a small role in spreading the love.

Warm wishes for a happy, healthy holiday season!

Michael Durand is the editor and publisher of the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers and the RichmondSunsetNews.com website. He can be reached at Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.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GABJO ART

Botticelli

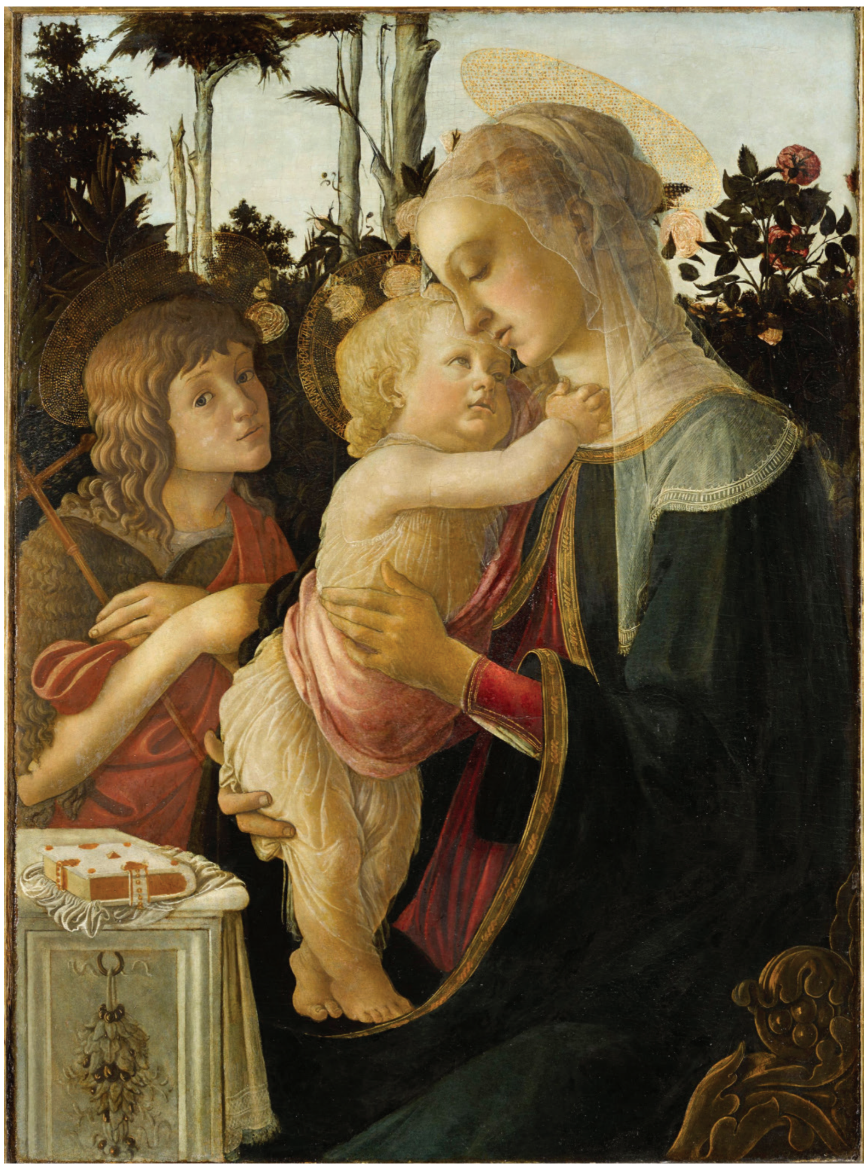
Continued from page 1

until his execution in 1498. Botticelli's productivity took a dip during this era and he lived in poverty in his final years.

The exhibition, which is laid out using a minimalist, clean aesthetic, covers all phases of Botticelli's career. Nothing competes with the subtle drawings, including those in the section titled, "Finale," which features the unfinished 1475-1476 painting, "Adoration of the Magi," a depiction of numerous people in worship poses directed at Mary and baby Jesus. Seeing three preparation drawings leading to an incomplete painting best brings Botticelli's artistry and craft into focus.

"The drawings reveal so much," said Rinaldi. "They allow an intimate understanding of the artist."

"Botticelli Drawings" runs through Feb., 11, 2024, at the Legion of Honor, 100 34th Ave. Special Events: A Conversation on the Renaissance of Dance, Botticelli to Balanchine, Dec. 9, 2 p.m., Gunn Theater; and Botticelli Curator Presentation, Jan. 13, 2024, 2 p.m., Gunn Theater. Information and tickets: famsf.org.



"The Virgin and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist" ("Madonna of the Rose Garden") by Sandro Botticelli, ca. 1468. Tempera and gold on poplar panel. Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, inv. 286 / L 3936 © RMN-Grand Palais. *Photo by Tony Querrec. Image courtesy of the Fine Art Museums of San Francisco.*

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Lowell High School's Admission Policy Again Being Reviewed by SFUSD

By Thomas K. Pendergast

Once again, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) Board of Education is contemplating ending the "merit-based" admissions policy at Lowell High School, replacing it instead with the lottery system used by most high schools in the district.

A high school task force was set up after a resolution was passed in June 2022 and it began meeting in November of that year to look at ways to improve all the district's high schools. One task force recommendation – changing Lowell admissions policy – has once again created a backlash.

In its final report, the task force recommended changes to the school's admissions policy that align with one of two approaches:

1. Admit students to Lowell by lottery among those interested in attending.
2. Admit students to Lowell based on revised academic criteria (i.e., a minimum grade point average) … and invest in outreach to students who qualify. Maintain priority for students attending middle schools that historically send fewer students to Lowell.

The current "merit-based" system relies on a qualifying test, special application and essay, and reserves spots for students from underrepresented middle schools or those with minimum academic criteria and strong recommendations from middle school staff.

In a recent interview with Jill Tucker of the San Francisco Chronicle, Superintendent Dr. Matt Wayne stated that switching to a minimum 3.0 GPA would create a diverse group of students and would meet the criteria for admissions, ideally increasing the overall diversity at the school, which is now disproportionately white and Asian American.

At this point, the matter is up for discussion. No action has been taken by the school board. No changes to the admissions policy at Lowell or any other school would take place for the fall of 2024 and full implementation of a plan would likely take until June of 2027.

The "merit-based" admissions to Lowell were set aside during the pandemic in 2020 because schools were shut down and the disruption meant that all the usual qualifiers were suddenly nonexistent or inadequate.

In June of 2022, the same month that the school board recommended setting up the task force, it also brought back merit-based admissions with a 4-3 vote.

All four board members who voted to reinstate the merit-based system were appointed by Mayor London Breed, three of them replacing previous board members who were recalled in an election that focused on several decisions by those members, including changing the Lowell admissions policy.

Other actions by the board which fueled the recall included the failed efforts to destroy the Life of George Washington murals at his namesake high school in the Richmond District and the renaming of 44 district schools.

And like these other controversies, the idea of abandoning the merit-based system at Lowell has sparked an acrimonious backlash, especially from members of the Asian-American community.

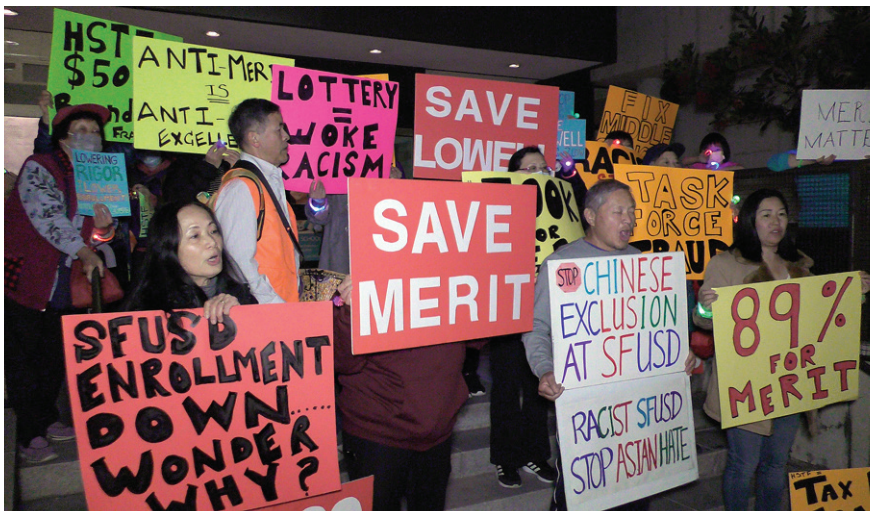
At a rally in front of district headquarters during a recent school board meeting, Forrest Liu, a self-described "stop Asian-hate activist," called out three members of the current school board, starting with Commissioner Mark Sanchez.

"As a middle school principal, (Sanchez) failed to get one of his students into Lowell. And what did he say? He said, 'Lowell failed,'" Liu said. "Sanchez is a failure, and you cannot blame Lowell."

"(Commissioner Matt Alexander) is a colonizer! He said that merit (based admission) is segregation. Merit is segregation. He is a colonizer!"

"(Board President Kevine Boggess)

Continued on page 6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Demonstrators opposed to changing Lowell High School's "merit-based" admission policy to a lottery system stood in front of the district headquarters on Franklin Street chanting "SFUSD, do your job!" before the school board meeting on Nov. 14. *Photo by Thomas K. Pendergast.*

Who's on Santa's good list?

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Real Estate

John M. Lee

2023 R.E. Market Review

As 2023 comes to an end, we have had an interesting year in the real estate market. The question being asked at the end of the year always is: "Where is the real estate market headed?"

The end of this last up-cycle in real estate finally ended last year, which started the downward trend that continued this year with higher inflation rates and rising interest rates causing even slower sales. With COVID-19 mostly under control, the focus turned to issues such as crime, homelessness, affordable housing, inflation and how to make the City better. Following is a short recap of what happened in our local San Francisco 2023 market.

The market started the year slow with the holiday carryover from 2022 and remained that way throughout the year. Sellers trying to sell were disappointed by the market reaction to their properties. If the home was all fixed up, in a desirable location, and at an attractive price, sellers were still able to get good prices as there are still buyers around. However, if there were some defects, the property might sit on the market for some time and sell at a discounted price. Then, as interest rates steadily increased during the year, sales slowed and prices dropped further.

The mortgage interest rates were in the 6-8% range throughout the year, coming down to about 7.5% at the end. The good news is that the latest numbers show the inflation rate moderating, and the Feds signaled that they might be done with raising rates. That resulted in a significant decrease in interest rates right before the end of the year. Economists are predicting that we might see rates in the 6-7% range next year. But just remember, recessions always follow periods of inflation. I believe that we are already in a recession, but it will not be confirmed until the data is in and the economists have a chance to weigh in on it.

Our preliminary numbers are showing that our sales in San Francisco will be down about 28% and prices down about 8% from 2022. I will do a more thorough analysis of our local Richmond and Sunset districts next month.

What does this mean? Will this downward trend continue? Will prices continue to drop?

The readers of my columns know that our market bottomed out in 2009 and we have been in a strong recovery mode ever since, resulting in large double-digit appreciation from 2012-15. The next few years came with a slower or normal rate of appreciation.

In 2020, COVID-19 hit the market and we had a stoppage in the market for a couple of months before sales came roaring back strong with people reconsidering their long-term housing situation and taking advantage of low interest rates. Our market here on the west side did very well as the trend of moving from high density to low density locations was evident throughout and created much demand in the Richmond and Sunset districts. Prices increased here more than other parts of the City.

In 2022, the down cycle started, then continued in 2023. Inflation was still high, and the Feds kept raising interest rates to try and keep it under control. They raised it a total of 1% in four separate increases. With each increase, mortgage rates rose accordingly.

While movement of long-term mortgage rates track closer to the 10-year treasury yields, the fed funds rate is one component that can affect it. Mortgage rates are more complicated, but the last couple of years they followed the fed fund increases pretty closely.

So, where is the market heading in 2024? I believe that we began our down leg in this real estate cycle about a year ago. Normally it is about seven years up and three to four years down and flat before we recover. We are currently back to about 2018-2019 prices. I expect prices will continue to slide in 2024 and hopefully bottom sometime during the year. I do not believe that our economy is as bad as in 2008-10 during the financial crisis years, so I am not looking for that type of crash to our real estate market.

Next year also is a presidential election year where President Joe Biden will do everything within his power to bring the interest rate down and the economy up before November. Locally, it will be a big election year with the mayor facing at least two major opponents and all the odd-numbered districts' supervisors are up for election. All of the politicians will do what they can to present a bright picture for our country and for San Francisco.

We are fortunate in San Francisco that, despite the problems we have, we are still a desirable place to live and there are still buyers purchasing. So, if you are a seller, though the prices are lower now, you can still sell the property at the right price. If you are a buyer, I would recommend proceeding with caution as large price appreciation will not be back for a few years but there are opportunities out there. If you are a real estate investor, now might be a good time to pick up properties that you could not have afforded the last few years.

I enjoyed speaking and exchanging emails with you this past year. Many of you had some great questions and insights about our market and the Richmond and Sunset districts. I wish you a safe holiday season and a prosperous 2024!

John M. Lee is a broker with Compass specializing in the Richmond and Sunset districts. If you have any real estate questions, call him at 415-465-0505 or email at johnlee@isellsf.com. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Richmond Homes Sold in November*

Address	Bed	Bath	Sq. Ft.	Price
7144 Geary Blvd.	3	2	1,662	$1,230,000
719 29th Ave.	3	1	1,204	1,250,000
155 Seal Rock Dr.	3	2	1,900	1,500,000
167 20th Ave.	3	2	2,359	1,700,000
230 22nd Ave.	2	1	1,540	1,700,000
650 23rd Ave.	4	3.5	2,603	1,900,000
137 11th Ave.	4	2	2,070	2,020,000
345 Ewing Terr.	4	3	2,606	2,650,000
318-12th Ave.	3	2.5	2,825	2,700,000
255 17th Ave.	4	2.5	2,874	3,250,000
129 24th Ave.	4	3.5	3,810	4,797,500
710 El Camino del Mar	6	5	6,854	9,850,000

**Partial listing. Source: M.L.S.*

Lowell Admissions

Continued from page 5

thinks there are too many Asians in SFUSD. Too many Asians! That is a slippery slope because when an Asian person is attacked on the street, when they are killed, who cares? Because there's too many Asians. Kevin Boggess and the school board are racists. Kevin Boggess is a racist and should resign," he said. "Sanchez is a failure and Alexander is a colonizer. SFUSD, do your job."

In 2021, attorney Christine Linnenbach successfully sued the district for violating the California state open meetings law because the board failed to properly list the resolution on the agenda when it voted to switch to the lottery system, did not provide equal time to both sides during public comment nor give the public adequate time to review the proposal before the vote.

"I'm here to tell the San Francisco Unified School District: 'We sued you before. We're going to sue you again. And we're going to win,'" Linnenbach said at the rally.

"We are tired of spending $500,000 – a hundred thousand dollars a page – for a sham task force, Trojan horse report to push a political agenda," Linnenbach said. "Are we going to let that happen? No! We are not going to let that happen. We're going to save merit.

"We want good schools that educate all students based on their individual performance, not this performative, parochial political agenda," she said.

There is a documented history of race-related incidents at Lowell.

In 2016, about two dozen students walked out in protest after an offensive sign was posted on a window at the school's library, which read "Happy Black History Month #Gang" and showed several hip-hop artists along with President Barack Obama. The students resented the word "Gang" being used in relation to Black History Month.

More recently, in January of 2021, an anti-racism lesson using an online bulletin program called Padlet was smeared by the use of anti-Black and anti-Semitic slurs, along with calling for the death of President Joe Biden.

At the Nov. 14 school board meeting, Sanchez gave his version of Lowell's racist history.

"We have a history of making racist, racially charged decisions in this district," Sanchez said. "And in the '90s, this district had a policy that allowed students to get into Lowell, if you're African American you didn't have to score as high as a white or Asian student. If you're a Latino, same thing.

"Families filed a class-action lawsuit against the district based on that policy and they won. The district lost," he said. "And so then the district was forced to come up with another policy."

In 2001 the district adopted the merit-based policy for Lowell, formerly known as the "three-bands" system. This was around the same time Sanchez was first elected to the school board.

"It did not provide the diversity that we had sought," Sanchez said. "And so, it's been a sticking point for me. I taught in the district for years. I was a principal in the district for years. Part of the system of the bands was to provide every middle school with a Lowell committee that would try to get kids access into Lowell.

"When I became principal at Horace Mann (middle school), that committee didn't exist. In my two years as principal at Horace Mann in the Mission District, not one of our students got into Lowell because we didn't have that committee. Nor did we have the bandwidth or the wherewithal to get that committee going."

Additionally, the merit-based policy might be illegal under California state law. Sanchez said he's still "uncomfortable" with using GPA to determine entrance into Lowell.

"I still think that breaks the law. I think that does not comport with the state law, which says that comprehensive high schools cannot use academic requirements or athletic requirements for entrance."

The California Education Code 35160.5 says schools must ensure "that selection of pupils to enroll in the school is made through a random, unbiased process that prohibits an evaluation of whether a pupil should be enrolled based upon the pupil's academic or athletic performance."

Yet that same code section says school districts "may employ existing entrance criteria for specialized schools or programs if the criteria are uniformly applied to all applicants."

The district does not officially consider Lowell a "specialized" school, but rather a "comprehensive" school. However, if there is a lawsuit against the current admissions policy, it might be argued that because of its emphasis on stringent higher academic standards, the school is very much specialized.

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GG Park Lights

Continued from page 1

and built elements along paved trails throughout the Garden. The responsive contract partner will collaboratively engage the Recreation and Park Department and the Gardens in the program design, and lead the installation, deinstallation and maintenance of the light activation through the run of the show."

Negotiations with the contract partner will begin after GGGP finalizes the selection. Upon successful agreement to all terms of the contract, the potential partner's proposal will be reviewed by the GGGP board of directors for approval, according to the RFP. If they determine that negotiations are not proceeding satisfactorily due to the fault of the selected respondent, GGGP may commence negotiations with another respondent or begin the selection process anew.

But several local environmentalists are crying foul over the impact that winter lighting may have on birds, plants and other wildlife using the space.

"Artificial lights do impact the timing of not just animals but plants," said Whitney Grover, deputy director for the Golden Gate Bird Alliance. "The timing of their blooming, the timing of their loss of leaves and all of their other biological functions (are affected) and then that in turn goes all the way up through the ecosystem.

"Birds are impacted by having the timing of their migration affected, the routes of their migration affected and then the timing of their breeding; and so all of these things can have cumulative impacts on the animals."

Grover suggested that if GGGP insists on doing this, they do things to minimize the impact.

"The Botanical Garden right now is a wonderful refuge for birds and wildlife from all the rest of the lights of the City," Grover said. "And we know it's just a small little patch in a big city that's very heavily lit, but right now, because the garden closes at night, it's a perfect little refuge for birds and other wildlife to not just be away from light impacts but also be away from humans at night.

"If the Garden is going to proceed with this, we ask that they turn off the lights as early in the evening as possible and keep them off through the rest of the night, only have them on for the opening hours of the exhibit and then turn them off no matter what," he said.

The San Francisco Chapter of Sierra Club member Vicky Hoover is adamantly opposed to the plan.

"Excessive continued nighttime lighting hurts the natural rhythms of many wildlife and interferes with migration and other movements by numerous birds," Hoover said. "And, at this time, shortly after the California state legislature passed (and the governor signed) SB-337, which codifies into law the governor's earlier executive order making 30 by 30 (the goal of conserving 30% of our state's lands and waters by 2030) of which program a significant auxiliary is to give better nature access to underserved urban communities and to enhance urban biodiversity – such extra park-lighting does neither of those things; in fact it sets us back.

"It is apparently a part of the City's increasing efforts to rely on commercial ventures in parks; the world-renowned park that has the mission of bringing nature into the City is becoming little more than a cash cow," Hoover said.

A Nov. 20 letter to the GGGP's president, Sarah Ryan, was made public by San Franciscans for Urban Nature (SFUN), a self-described group of community members who support protecting nature in the City, expressing its disapproval.

"We are very concerned about the new RFP asking for proposals for the installation and operation of additional lighting, including a light show with sound, in either the San Francisco Botanical Garden, the Japanese Tea Garden or the Conservatory of Flowers," the letter stated. "We request that you rescind this RFP."

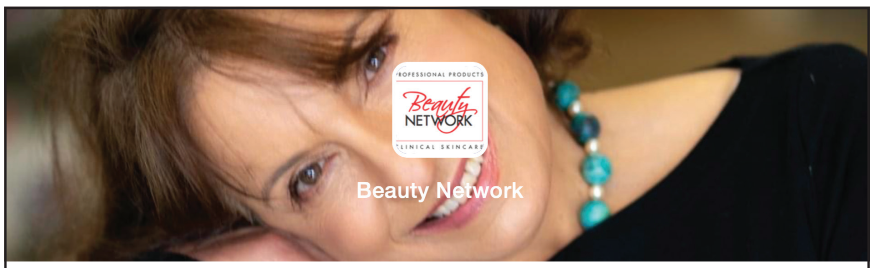
Among 20 individual concerns about the project listed in the letter were those related to timing and public input.

"The RFP was issued on Oct. 12, and the proposals had to be submitted to the GGGP by Nov. 15. This short timeline gives the public little time to react to this proposal, and in addition, gives respondents little time to come up with well-thought-out proposals, unless they were somehow made aware of the RFP before it was issued," the letter states.

"This proposal has been created within the GGGP Board, but with no notice or hearing before the public. Does the public-private partnership structure of GGGP prevent the public from learning about and commenting in a timely manner on activities that will take place in one of San Francisco's major parks?" SFUN said.

"The RFP states that the proposed projects must make money for the GGGP as well as for the Department of Recreation and Parks. Tickets are projected to cost between $28 and $40 per person. The minimum net revenue generated for the gardens must be at least $500,000. Half of all revenue will go to the Department of Recreation and Parks. At what point will making money overrule habitat protection?"

A representative of the Gardens of Golden Gate Park sent the above image, explaining, "We are still in the very early stages and don't yet know what a winter lights event at the Gardens would actually look like. So, as included in the request for proposals is this image from Flower Piano at Night at the Botanical Garden as the closest comparable event." ***Photo courtesy of Gardens of Golden Gate Park.***



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Commentary

Quentin L. Kopp

Sending Judges Out to Pasture

The unreliability of American and San Francisco media today is not new to our country. Neither is the people's right to discard biased, unsound judges.

Thomas Jefferson once declared: "As, for the safety of society, we commit honest maniacs to Bedlam, so judges should be withdrawn from their bench, whose erroneous biases are leading us to dissolution. It may indeed injure them in fame or in fortune; but it saves the republic, which is the first and supreme law." So, too, may we commit two San Francisco Superior Court judges to a pasture with other lawyers on March 5, 2024, the primary election.

One candidate for such non-judicial pasture is Patrick Thompson at the Hall of Justice. He could be described as a "revolving door" who released defendant drug dealers without bail despite a history of their repeated drug-dealing convictions.

Deputy District Attorney Jean Myungjin Roland, a veteran prosecutor for more than 22 years, is running against Thompson. Ms. Roland was born in South Korea and emigrated to the United States at the age of 1, brought by her parents who spoke no English but learned English at night leaving Ms. Roland and her sibling with willing neighbors. With persistent hard work, her parents bought a home in the Sunset and owned small retail stores in the Richmond, Japantown and Union Square. Jean Roland attended West Portal Lutheran School, Lowell High School, UC Berkeley and Boston University Law School. On weekends, after school and during summers, she worked in those small luggage and gift stores. Ms. Roland and her husband are raising two children who now attend St. Ignatius High School and St. Cecilia School, respectively. She is now managing attorney of the General Felony Trial Unit and is, manifestly, extremely well qualified for the Superior Court. I'm proud to endorse and recommend her to voters.

Challenging another "revolving door" judge is Chip Zecher, another experienced trial attorney from the Sunset District, who was appointed in 2019 by Gov. Gavin Newson to the governing board of the University of California Law San Francisco (formerly Hasting College of Law). He is now vice chairman of such board. He began his legal career as a research attorney at the San Francisco Superior Court, then opened his own law office as a trial attorney with cases in the nine Bay Area Counties. Mr. Zecher was also chosen by then-Mayor Gavin Newsom to serve in 2003 on his mayoral transition committee.

Zecher will run against Michael Megert on March 5, 2024, another jurist averse to decisions protecting public safety. He currently is at the Community Justice Center, 575 Polk St., a non-trial appendage of our Superior Court and hardly a fulcrum of contested criminal law litigations. Chip Zecher is clearly the citizenry choice for Superior Court.

But wait: The fearless Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin and two of his "progressive" colleagues, Walton and Chan, immediately introduced last month, after Roland and Zecher filed their candidacy forms, a resolution decrying the nerve of the aforementioned excellent trial lawyers in running against the "revolving door" incumbents. The five-page resolution condemns those who demonstrate the "chutzpah" of running for judge, as if such legal miscreants lack qualification, independence and impartiality. In their view, it's un-American to challenge such judges at a legally required election!

I remind stupidvisors Peskin, Walton and Chan that California law authorizes qualified attorneys to contest any judge's election. Perhaps the most stimulating instance of that occurred in 1985 when then-Chief Justice Rose Elizabeth Bird and justices Cruz Reynoso and Joseph Grodin were denied election to another California Supreme Court term by California voters outraged at their failure to uphold trial court sentences in criminal cases, including the death penalty for murderers. (About 67% of the voters threw them out of office!) Will history repeat itself on a smaller scale? I obviously hope so and hope you do, too.

The aforementioned Peskin, Walton, Chan resolution was referred to the Government Audit and Oversight Committee, composed of supervisors Peskin, Chan and Catherine Stefani. At press time, no date, time or room of that committee hearing on the resolution had been published, so stay tuned on those free-speech mavens.

Meanwhile, Chanukah begins at sundown Dec. 7, and ends seven nights later while Christmas occurs on Monday, Dec. 25. I plan to spend New Year's Day at the Rose Parade, then the Rose Bowl. I convey warm best wishes for a happy Chanukah, merry Christmas and happy, healthy New Year to all of you faithful readers.

A teacher said to a student: "It's clear you haven't studied your geography. Why not?" "Well," the student replied, "my dad says the world is changing every day, so I decided to wait until it settles down." Be of good cheer in the new year!

Quentin Kopp is a former San Francisco supervisor, state senator, SF Ethics Commission member, president of the California High Speed Rail Authority governing board and retired Superior Court judge.

Commentary

Julie Pitta

Billion Dollar Baby

In news that came as no surprise to anyone, last month Marjan Philhour announced her third run for District 1 supervisor.

Knocking out an incumbent – even in a district gerrymandered to improve her prospects – won't be easy. That said, Philhour will benefit greatly from the largesse of the wealthiest political players in San Francisco, most notably the City's tech elite.

San Francisco's newly minted billionaires aren't content with the considerable power they already wield at City Hall. They want nothing less than a political takeover, one eliminating the elected officials who staunchly advocate for working San Franciscans. Among them is District 1 Supervisor Connie Chan.

Chan is an obstacle to their plan. Without her – and elected officials like her – the City will become ever more hostile to all but the well-heeled.

Voters would do well to follow the money in next year's election. Philhour's past campaigns were remarkable for the amount raised from the City's most conservative political donors, among them the police officers, apartment and Realtors associations. In a single race, she spent more than $1 million to secure a seat on the Board of Supervisors, all to no avail.

This time, she'll have San Francisco's tech billionaires at her side. Within hours of Philhour's announcement, she received an endorsement from GrowSF, a richly funded political action committee started by two tech industry veterans. Earlier this year, the PAC trumpeted its plan to "clear out Connie," referring to Chan.

In Philhour they've found a candidate happy to cater to their agenda, one that includes unfettered development on the City's west side, a return to the failed war on drugs and relaxed regulations for companies doing business in San Francisco.

In a preview of the campaign to come, Philhour released a video to announce her entry in the race. In it, she and a group of residents claimed to be "fed up" by neighborhood crime. In an interview with the San Francisco Examiner, Philhour doubled-down, saying, "I do think people are fed up, because I am a people, and I am fed up." She claimed that Chan intends to "dismantle" the San Francisco Police Department.

Philhour's charge comes only months after Chan recommended a handsome 8.5% increase to the police budget. Clearly, the would-be supervisor clearly doesn't let facts get in the way of a good campaign slogan.

Fear-mongering about neighborhood and citywide crime is nothing more than a red herring used by corporate PACs to distract from a pro-big-business agenda. Groups like GrowSF and TogetherSF Action, backed by billionaire venture capitalist Michael Moritz, are banking on it to allow them to avoid paying their fair share to support a city that's made them obscenely rich. A carefully crafted media campaign painting San Francisco in the worst possible light – and blaming progressive leaders for the City's ills – will prove successful in ousting the elected officials in their way.

Their assessment of San Francisco's problems is as misleading as it is simplistic. The tech and real estate industries are largely responsible for the massive inequity that has led to the pain all too evident on city streets. Their proposed solutions are equally flawed. Unchecked residential development will not produce the affordable housing San Francisco so desperately needs, a renewed war on drugs will not resolve our addiction crisis (and will, in fact, cost lives), and lower corporate taxes will starve the social programs that serve a growing number of struggling San Franciscans.

Actions taken during the COVID-19 pandemic prove just how effective progressive policies can be. During pandemic, evictions were banned, hotel rooms were offered to the unhoused and the City opened its first safe-consumption site. Countless lives were saved and homelessness was reduced by double digits.

A backlash was inevitable. The City's billionaires resented footing the bill. Mayor Breed, elected with their money, bowed to their wishes. The results were tragic and predictable. As District 5 Supervisor Dean Preston, a frequent target of billionaire ire, recently wrote: "Crime hasn't gone down, overdoses have increased and in neighborhoods like the Tenderloin, shootings have gone up and become more brazen as drug market are disrupted with no comprehensive plan."

Recently, San Francisco venture capitalist and GrowSF board member Garry Tan hosted a party for his fellow elites that served as a convention for the City's corporate PACs. According to one guest, they plan to spend as much as $15 million in San Francisco's 2024 election. Among the party-goers was none other than Philhour, enjoying the kind of hospitality only the mega-rich can offer.

She'll get much more than free cocktails in the 2024 election. Philhour will get her share of the money these corporate PACs will dump into the 2024 election. A former aide to Breed, Philhour paints herself as the candidate of change. She is anything but. If elected, she'll be little more than a tool for San Francisco's 1%. The rest of us will be forced to live with the consequences.

Julie Pitta is a member of the executive board of the Berniecrats. She is a former senior editor for Forbes Magazine and staff writer for the Los Angeles Times. Email: julie.pitta@gmail.com. X (Twitter): @juliepitta. Find an archive of her columns online at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

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Assembly

Assemblymember Phil Ting

New Year, New Laws

It's almost time to ring in the new year! As 2023 comes to a close, I want to let you know of about a few state laws I championed that are taking effect on Jan. 1.

At the top of the list is one that will be affecting the families in California by cleaning up the air that children riding school buses are breathing. Assemby Bill-579 requires all new school bus purchases after 2035 to be zero emission. According to the California Air Resources Board, a child who rides the bus to and from school accounts for 33% of that child's daily exposure to toxic air pollutants. A consistent statewide planning goal to obtain zero-emission buses is critical to improving air quality and student health outcomes, especially in communities already disproportionately impacted by severe air pollution.

Another bill that affects many in my district is AB-449, which requires law enforcement agencies to adopt a hate-crimes policy and follow specific guidelines when responding to incidents. We have seen cases and victims treated differently from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. A hate-crime victim should consistently be treated with respect and dignity no matter if the crime was committed in San Francisco or Oakland.

Differences of opinion on religion, war, or even wearing a mask has spurred debate that has sometimes turned hostile. What does this mean for our diverse communities? We saw a massive spike in hate crimes against the AAPI community. Stop AAPI Hate has collected more than 10,900 reports to its website. Thankfully, while we have seen a decline in AAPI hate crimes and incidents, other communities continue to suffer from hate violence:

- Overall, reported hate crime events in California increased 20.2%, from 1,763 in 2021 to 2,120 in 2022.
- Hate crimes against Black people remain the most prevalent and increased 27.1% from 513 in 2021 to 652 in 2022.
- Reported hate crime events involving a sexual orientation bias increased, rising 29% from 303 in 2021 to 391 in 2022.

It is my hope with the passage of laws such as AB-449 and providing awareness about resources, such as the hate crime reporting hotline and website at the California Civil Rights Department, we can spread the message that hate is not OK and that there is support available for those who need it.

Also starting next year, consumers will get more information about the cookware they are using and purchasing. AB-1200 requires manufacturers to label their cookware if it contains Per- and Polyflouroalkyl chemicals (PFAS). It was passed in 2021, but companies were given until 2024 to comply with the labeling component of the bill.

It has been determined that PFAS is a class of roughly 9,000 man-made chemicals linked to health problems, including cancer, hormone disruption, thyroid disease and vaccine interference. When PFAS come into contact with food, people ingest them. With AB-1200, consumers can make a choice on whether or not they want their food to be in contact with these harmful chemicals.

This coming year will be my last in the Assembly. It has been an absolute honor serving as your assemblymember and I will continue to prioritize making California a better state for everyone until my term is over. I hope you and your family have a wonderful holiday season and a great 2024.

Phil Ting represents the 19th Assembly District, which includes the west side of San Francisco along with the communities of Broadmoor, Colma and Daly City as well as part of South San Francisco. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

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BAZAAR CAFE EVENTS

Literature: Bazaar Writers Salon, first Sunday of the month, 6-8:30 p.m.
Music: Matt Jaffe Songwriter Showcase, Saturday, Dec. 1; Alex Wise, Saturday, Dec. 2; Lizzie Waters, Flora and Noah Solt, Sunday, Dec. 9, 5 p.m.; Rubina Mazurka, Dec. 10.
Comedy: Danny Dechi Comedy Showcase, Friday, Dec. 15. 5927 California St. All events 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

COMMENTARIES AND LETTERS

From the editor: All commentaries we publish are the opinions of the writers and should not be considered our editorial stances on issues. We strive to remain neutral and offer a balance of viewpoints. We invite readers who wish to express their opinions to send a letter to the editor to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Word limit for the newspaper is 350, for the website, 500. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

FELTON TECH SQUAD

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CHILDREN/FAMILY PROGRAMS:

"Storytime." Playtime follows directly after Storytime. Limited to 46 participants, tickets required. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11-11:30 a.m.

"Storytime for Babies." Playtime follows directly after the Storytime. Limited to 46 participants, tickets required. Mondays 11-11:30 a.m.

"Workshop: Ohlone Games with Ranger Fatima." Learn how to make and play the Ohlone game Staves and learn about indigenous plants in San Francisco with Ranger Fatima. Space is limited. Reservations required: 415-355-5600. Fatima Colindres has worked as an interpretive park ranger at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area at the Presidio of San Francisco since 1988. They are passionate about providing a rich national park experience to people who traditionally have not visited the parks. Saturday, Dec. 2, 2-3 p.m.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN & TEENS:

"Craft: LED Ornaments." Create an ornament that will light up your dreary winter days. Use fabric, decorative trim and LED bulbs and make something unique. For ages 9–18. Space limited. Wednesday, Dec. 6, 3-4:30 p.m.

"Activity: Green Art." Make beautiful art, gifts and wrapping paper made from natural objects and items from around the house. For ages 5–15. Supplies limited. Tuesday, Dec. 19, 3-4:30 p.m.

ALL AGES:

"Workshop: Create Your Own Tile." Learn how to decoupage ceramic tiles. We provide tiles and Mod Padge. Bring your ideas. Space is limited. Call 415-355-5648 to register. Saturday, Dec. 9, 11 a.m. -12:30 p.m.

ADULT PROGRAMS:

"Tutorial: Drop-In Tech Support for Older Adults with the Felton Institute Tech Squad." Get one-on-one help with your phone or tablet, searching the Internet, setting up an email account and other basic computer tasks. Cantonese-speaking Tech Squad members are available to assist, Friday, Dec. 1, 1:30-4 p.m.

"Tutorial: Tech Savy at 60+." Learn basics of tablets and iPhones. It is a seven-class series. The class topics include introduction of devices and hand gesture, setting up and using email account, using WeChat, changing keyboard and language, installing applications on your devices, Wi-Fi setting and Internet introduction, and joining a Zoom meeting. Please bring your own devices: Apple/Android. The class is taught in Cantonese. Space is limited, please reserve: 415-355-5600. This program is in partnership with Self-Help for the Elderly. Wednesday, Dec. 6, 1-2 p.m.

"Author: Boze Hadleigh, Game Show Confidential." Boze Hadleigh will discuss his latest book "Game Show Confidential." Q&A to follow. "Game Show Confidential" describes the evolution of the game show, its larger-than-life producers and hosts, as well as the scandals that have rocked it from time to time, including bloopers from such "adult" oriented shows as "The Dating Game," "The Newlywed Game," and "Hollywood Squares." Hadleigh is the author of 29 books, most of them Hollywood-themed. The Los Angeles Times labeled him "a pop culture phenomenon." He has a master's degree in journalism, speaks five languages, has visited more than 60 countries, and won on "Jeopardy!" His non-Hollywood books include "492 Great Things about Being Italian," "Broadway Babylon," "Life's a Pooch" and "Holy Cow!" Dec. 9, 2-3:30 p.m.

"Workshop: Elderly Fall Prevention." Representatives from North East Medical Services will present information on fall prevention for the elderly. You will learn the importance of fall prevention, things that can cause falls, health consequences and prevention tips. Space is limited. Reservations required: 415-355-5600.This is a partnership with North East Medical Services. Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2-3 p.m.

"Read Together, Silent Book Club." Bring any book (fiction or nonfiction) for a period of silent reading followed by a discussion when you share what you are reading with others. The club meets every other Wednesday, Dec. 13 and 27, 3-5 p.m.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy December birthday to Arya, Jarrod B., Livvy and Saffy Basey, Jen Berman, Arlene Bradlyn, Derrick Carvajal, Ryan 'Puddin Pants' Chan, Helen Curran, Luca "The Bazooka" Dermu, Aaron Ding, Nico Eshel, Justine Fields, Sima Grabovsky, Mackenzie Huynh, Maria Jesue, Paul Kozakiewicz, Suzanne Leigh, Shannon "Spilly" Magnin, Dave Mana, Brittany Markert, Bryan Marsh, Leland Monagle, Laurie Rittman, Reid Russell, Shay Sosa, Millie Young, David Wang, Athena Weber and David Wong. *To add a name to the monthly birthday list, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Free.*

MEET THE EDITOR OF THE RICHMOND REVIEW

Meet the editor of the Richmond Review: You are invited to meet with Michael Durand, editor and publisher of the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers and the RichmondSunsetNews.com website. Bring your story ideas, feedback, suggestions, questions, announcement items and advertising inquiries. We are also welcoming new writers and photographers interested in contributing stories and photos. The Meet the Editor session is at the One Richmond storefront, 802 Clement St., every second Thursday of the month, 1-2:30 p.m. For more information, call 415-706-6428 or email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Scheduled appointments not necessary but appreciated.

OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE

Office space on Geary, next door to Tigges Jewelers and Clock Repairs (since 1932) between 22nd and 23rd avenues, will be available for occupancy Jan. 1, 2024. The space is semi-furnished. Rent is $400/month and includes utilities. To see the space, contact Rudy at Vance Economic Services at 415-387-7417.

ONE RICHMOND COMMUNITY MARKET

The One Richmond Community Market is aimed at enhancing food security and fostering community connections. Once a week on Wednesdays, we will provide several items of fresh food for participants. To ensure this initiative reaches those who can benefit most, we have specific criteria in place. Please go to onerichmondsf.com/one-richmond-community-market for eligibility and registration process. Contact: onerichmondsf@gmail.com.

ONLINE-ONLY CONTENT

Visit our website, to find features that you can't find in the newspaper. Look for "Cooking Together," by Shanta Nimbark Sacharoff, "Overtures and Undertows," a column by Noma Faingold, a talented writer and longtime contributor to the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers. Business features include, "Business Profile" by John Oppenheimer and "A Shot of Salvation" by Deno Gellepes. Check out the recent "Photos of the Month" gallery. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

'PHOTOS OF THE MONTH' GALLERY ONLINE

Photographers are invited to submit three of their best photos for consideration to be published in the "Photos of the Month" gallery on RichmondSunsetNews.com. The website averages 20,000 views per month. Please submit photos as jpegs on the 15th of each month. For more information, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com or call 415-706-6428.

REFUSE REFUSE CLEANUPS

Friday, Dec. 1, 3:30–5 p.m., Clement Street Happy Hour Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/437706/.
Saturday, Dec. 2, 10–11:30 a.m., KEEP Ocean Beach Clean, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/399341/.
Thursday, Dec. 7, 10:30 a.m.–noon, SF Village Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/413075/.
Thursday, Dec. 7, 3:30–4:30 p.m., One Richmond Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/528372/.
Saturday, Dec. 9, 10–11:30 a.m., KEEP Ocean Beach Clean, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/399341/.
Sunday, Dec. 10, 10 a.m.–noon, Outer Richmond Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/450069/.
Tuesday, Dec. 12, 3:30-4:30 p.m., Richmond Library Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/553131/.
Friday, Dec. 15, 4–5:30 p.m., Outer Richmond Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/450069/.
Satursday, Dec. 16, 10–11:30 a.m., KEEP Ocean Beach Clean, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/399341/.
Sunday, Dec. 17, 11:00 a.m.–1 p.m., Baker Beach Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/560617/.
Saturday, Dec. 23, 10–11:30 a.m., KEEP Ocean Beach Clean, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/399341/.
Saturday, Dec. 30, 10 a.m.–noon, Richmond District Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/441884/.
Saturday, Dec. 30, 10–11:30 a.m., KEEP Ocean Beach Clean - https://www.mobilize.us/togethersf/event/399341/.

SALVATION ARMY HOLIDAY FESTIVAL

The Salvation Army Pinehurst Women's Auxiliary will hold its Holiday Festival on Saturday, Dec. 2, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at 2685 30th Ave. (at Wawona), rain or shine. Silent auction, Pinehurst Cafe (piroshkis, jams, baked goods and more) and Pinehurst Gift Shoppe (fashionable clothing, jewelry, accessories and unique gifts). Proceeds benefit The Salvation Army Pinehurst Program for Women. Free admission, raffle prize. For more information, contact Cheryl Russell Gloeckner at nevadasissy@yahoo.com.

SENIOR NEEDS A HOME

Senior lady, quiet, with references, needs a place to live at a private residence in the west area of San Francisco. Having arthritis, she avoids flights of steps and hills. Uses public transportation. Call 415-561-9275 if you or someone you know can provide her a home.

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to Maria Gloria. Your friends at the Richmond Review appreciate you!

STAMP COLLECTOR AND STAMP COLLECTIONS

Stamp collector is buying stamps and stamp collections. I am buying "older stamps" from the 1800s to 1930. American Philatelic Society member since 1986. Pictures are appreciated. Call or text message 415-533-0761.

TAKING A BREAK

The Richmond Review Crossword puzzle by Jess Goldstein is scheduled to resume in January.

THANK YOU!

Sincere thanks to the Richmond Review readers who generously donated to the Nourish Your Neighborhood Newspaper campaign. Your contribution helped keep us financially healthy. If you donated before we started our Patreon campaign and would like some of our Richmond Review branded products (tote bag, pens, coffee mug, hat or shirt), please send an email to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. We would also like to share just your name in the paper to thank you. Please let us know if that is OK. To donate, please visit our website to sign up for our Patreon campaign, send a check to Richmond Review, P.O. Box 16035, SF, CA, 94116 or send via PayPal to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Thank you!

WRITING AND EDITING SERVICE

I am a California licensed attorney who is able to help with many of your writing,

Continued on page 11

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Continued from page 10

editing and proofreading needs. I can assist with reports, proposals, professional applications, books, resumes and cover letters. I have 25 years of government experience and a 12-year human resources and recruiting background. Recently, I edited a manuscript for one author and provide ongoing editorial support to another. I welcome large and small projects. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, concerns or feedback. Email: writerseditors17@gmail.com or call/text 415-407-7328. I look forward to working with you.

Announcements: $1 per word, 20 word minimum. Share birthday greetings, weddings, anniversaries, births, obituaries, graduations, sports highlights, business accomplishments, retirements, college admissions, etc.

Announcements run in the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers (36,200 copies) and on RichmondSunsetNews.com (20,000+ views per month). Ads must be pre-paid. Deadline: 22nd of the month. Mail check to: P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116 or use PayPal to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Call 415-706-6428 or email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com for more details.

FREE: Add a name to the monthly birthday list or a community event announcements free of charge.

We support small businesses: Free announcements for small businesses celebrating an anniversary or other significant milestone or event. Send announcement to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Richmond Review's Youngest Reader?

Richmond ReView
JOIN US AT SAINT MONICA SCHOOL COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE
DATE: SUNDAY, NOV 5th, 2023
TIME: 12:00 PM – 2:30 PM
Merchants Disturbed by Spate of Repeat Burglaries
History Lovers Rejoice
Hundreds Celebrate Mystery of Ocean Shipwrecks
Suspect Arrested for Murder of Richmond Merchant
Our community has the right to health care
INSIDE

While other kids were enjoying their snacks, this boy (about 10 years old) was reading the November issue of the Richmond Review at Joe's Ice Cream, 5420 Geary Blvd., on Nov. 28. Joe's is one of the many businesses and organizations that help distribute the newspaper every month. *Photo by Alice Kim.*

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History

Nicole Meldahl

The Alexandria: A Message of Hope

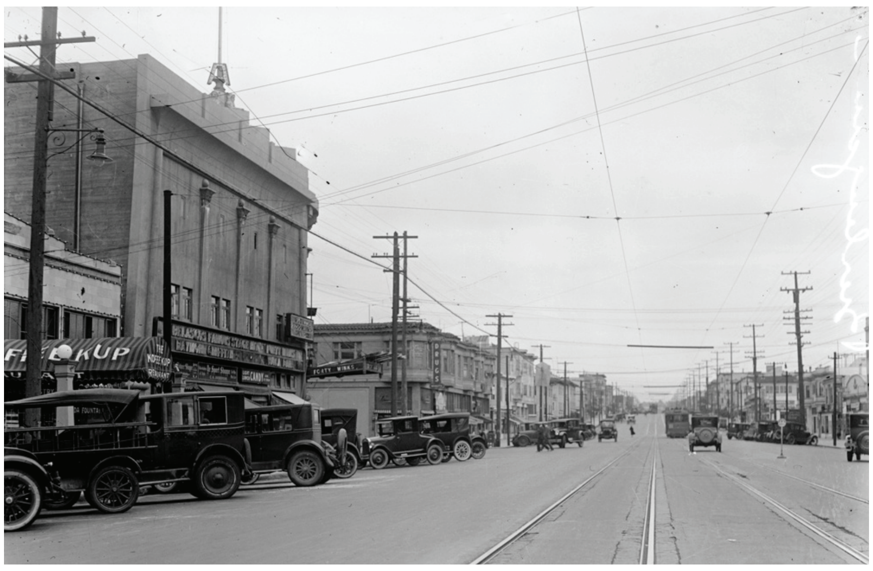
The Alexandria Theatre has graced the corner of Geary Boulevard at 18th Avenue since Nov. 26, 1923, when the Levin family opened this once grand movie palace that lit up the Richmond District fog.

It was the first Egyptian-themed theater to be constructed in San Francisco and "one of the finest residential theaters in America," according to a proclamation from its builders, Alex and Joseph Levin, in the Dec. 15, 1922, issue of "The Richmond Banner" (predecessor of the neighborhood newspaper you're reading now). Back then, this commercial corridor was touted as a "new million-dollar business district" in debut advertisements, and the theater its keystone attraction. This was a very big deal.

The Alexandria was (and still is) iconic. The building was designed by the Reid Brothers, who were also responsible for westside landmarks like the 1909-era Cliff House and the Spreckels Temple of Music in Golden Gate Park. You can still discern elegant exterior flourishes that harken to the theater's Egyptian design, like papyrus caps on the columns that rise from its degrading marquee. The Levins were also a big deal. Many of the iconic neighborhood theaters that still define the skyline of our City can be connected to the families of Alex or his brother, Samuel.

I was lucky to record an oral history with Samuel's grandson, Fred Levin, in my role as executive director of the Western Neighborhoods Project (WNP), a community history nonprofit dedicated to preserving and sharing stories from San Francisco's west side. Fred grew up and attended school in the Richmond District where, during his lifetime, his family owned and operated The Balboa, Coliseum and Coronet theaters, in addition to the Alexandria and others beyond the neighborhood, like the Metro in the Marina, the Harding in Alamo Square and the Vogue in Presidio Heights.

You cannot understand a place without understanding its people, and, ultimately, I think neighborhood theaters are more about people, like the Levins, than the movies they screen. Not surprisingly, Fred started out working for the family business and was even an usher at the Alexandria at one time. When I look at the Alexandria, I see the Levin family and think about all they've done for our City. I also think about all the local teens who had first dates or first jobs here. I think of the newsreels that ran before first- or second-run features that kept people critically connected to world events like the country's descent into the Great Depression or the end of World War II. When I look at the Alexandria today, even in its derelict state, I see a place where the Richmond District came to be entertained, be informed, and be together – a place built by San Franciscans for San Franciscans.



Alexandria Theatre, at left, on Geary Boulevard near 18th Avenue on June 1925. ***Photo from the Randolph Brandt Collection courtesy of Emiliano Echeverria/OpenSFHistory, wnp30.0061.***

Now vacant for almost 20 years, many don't think of the Alexandria like this or remember the building in its prime. However, there are those who do still remember it fondly. In the latest issue of the WNP membership magazine, you'll find an Alexandria article written by our co-founder and former executive director, Woody LaBounty. As always, he combines scholarly research with recollections from his time growing up in the neighborhood. This, in my opinion, is history at its best – information bound together by memories. This is why we always include a story pulled from our oral history program in the magazine, as we did with "Fred Levin Remembers" in late 2021.

How the Alexandria's future unfolds also relies on people. When the theater's neon sign was unceremoniously cut to pieces and removed, my heart hurt. Many of us began to fear the worst. Western Neighborhoods Project decided to bring attention to this regal survivor by commemorating the theater's 100th anniversary with a little help from our friends. On view through early 2024 is a window exhibition at our office (1617 Balboa St.), curated by Lindsey Hanson and Gary Parks, that shares the Alexandria's story. We also recently coordinated a historic program at The Balboa Theatre called "The Alexandria at 100," with talks from San Francisco Heritage, San Francisco Neighborhood Theater Foundation and San Francisco Neon – groups that are keeping an eye on this icon in its uncertain present. Which leads me to the $1 million question: What will grace the corner of Geary Boulevard and 18th Avenue next? A theater? No, a pool? Maybe, eventually, housing?

Of course, only time will tell. In the meantime, I'm so grateful for the extraordinary people who defend cultural landmarks in harm's way. Western Neighborhoods Project is not a political group; instead, we make historic context accessible to the public so organizations like those mentioned can focus on the advocacy necessary for historic preservation. I see the people who power this work – Woody LaBounty, Katherine Petrin and Alfonso Felder, Al Barna and Randall Ann Homan – striving to balance the needs of San Francisco's overcrowded present with the needs of San Franciscans to experience a communal sense of place.

Now, when I look at the theater, I also see these people who care about what happens to the Alexandria and it gives me hope for its future.

Nicole Meldahl is the executive director of the Western Neighborhoods Project. Learn more at outsidelands.org. You can find more of Meldahl's writings on her blog (nostosalgos.org) or her Instagram (@nostosnic).

Fred Levin (third from right) with staff in the Alexandria Theatre lobby, June 1960. ***Photo from the Jack Tillmany Collection courtesy of a Private Collector/OpenSFHistory, wnp67.0001.***

GG Park Corpse Case

Continued from page 1

cally, the DA's office obtains a warrant; but a Ramey warrant is obtained by the police department. Ramey warrants are relatively rare.

On Nov. 21, Randy Quezada, the spokesman for SF District Attorney Brooke Jenkins, stated that the charges have been discharged for now.

"The charges against two suspects arrested for unlawful disposal of human remains (Health and Safety Code 7054(a)(1)) and conspiracy for the same (Penal Code 182(a)) by the SFPD in connection to a suspicious death in the Richmond District were discharged on Nov. 7, 2023, pending further investigation on the homicide case,"

"Although the charges against the two suspects have been discharged at this time," Quezada stated. "The investigation is continuing, and charges could be filed at a later date. The District Attorney's Office is committed to fair and ethical prosecutions which require all cases that we charge to be provable beyond a reasonable doubt to a jury.

"Cases presented to the district attorney's office for prosecution are carefully assessed to ensure that there is enough evidence to prove that the suspects are guilty beyond a reasonable doubt," he stated. "Additionally, proceeding on these charges alone in this case now could jeopardize a prosecution for murder later."

Moriarty did not answer a request for comment Nov. 21 and another Nov. 29 as to why Madden is in custody; while Beckhusen's name does not show up in the sheriff's department custody lookup, Madden's does. His next hearing is Dec. 7 at the Hall of Justice and he is charged with criminal threats, stalking, allegation of offense on bail or O.R., arson causing great bodily injury, three unlisted felonies, second-degree robbery, possession or manufacture of combustible material or incendiary device, arson of property of another and threatening a public officer.

SFPD officer Gonee Sepulveda said : "unfortunately, I cannot confirm the cusUody status." Subsequently, Tara Moriarty of the Sheriff's Department confirmed that Madden is in custody, but she could not find Beckhusen.

Moriarty did not immediately return a request for comment Nov. 21 as to why Madden is in custody; neither show up on the Sheriff's Department's online tool to look up people in San Francisco jails.

The case remains open and active. Quezada asked anyone with knowledge of the situation to contact the SFPD with information at the SFPD 24-hour tip line at 415-575-4444 or Text a Tip to TIP411 and begin the text message with SFPD. Tipsters may remain anonymous.

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Commentary

Brian Quan

Community Involvement

I am thematically out of order to end the year after trying to make a Christmas metaphor last month. But, since I'm writing this column before Thanksgiving, I want to reflect on things I am thankful for this past year, including being able to highlight our wonderful little neighborhood.

While I won't strain to make a connection to the early settlers being helped by Native Americans, it is with the sentiment of cooperation that I would like to frame a change in mindset before heading into 2024.

Instead of being thankful for the bounty of a harvest, I want to acknowledge a thankfulness for the ways I've been able to get involved in the community. Too often we focus our gratitude on how we have benefited and not with a more outward mindset. As such, I want to highlight three local organizations that I have had the pleasure of working with.

An organization that has deep roots in the neighborhood is the Park Presidio-Sunset Lion's Club and I'm proud to call myself a member. A service organization, we raised funds this past year through various events, like a golf tournament and an afternoon of bingo, to be able to distribute those funds to various other organizations. We help collect eyeglasses for recycling and plan to bring back our annual blood drive in the spring. While just a small part of a larger international organization, it is a great little community of service-oriented individuals who have endured the pandemic and are working toward growing the club's impact.

Homegrown within our streets is the story of Vince Yuen and the volunteer force of RefuseRefuseSF, which organizes clean ups all around our City. While my initial involvement was as just another clean-up volunteer at Ocean Beach every month, buying into Vince's vision helped me realize that we can all do more to help establish a culture of cleanliness in the neighborhood. Stopping trash from reaching the ocean is a side benefit of an Outer Richmond clean up.

Another real benefit I've found leading these clean ups is meeting new people who want to get more involved in the neighborhood and trading knowledge about places to go and things to do around town.

New to the neighborhood is a little group that got its start as Revive SF Chinatown and now goes by Dear Community. I originally met them when their goal was to bring people back to the restaurants in Chinatown in 2021.

The organization has expanded its scope and now includes community building and addressing mental health issues. Recently, it helped a couple of businesses on Clement Street with its Dear Community Bites Back program. By bringing customers to recently-broken-into Lung Fung Bakery and AceKing BBQ, not only did it provide extra revenue, but it also highlighted the plight still facing many small businesses in our neighborhood.

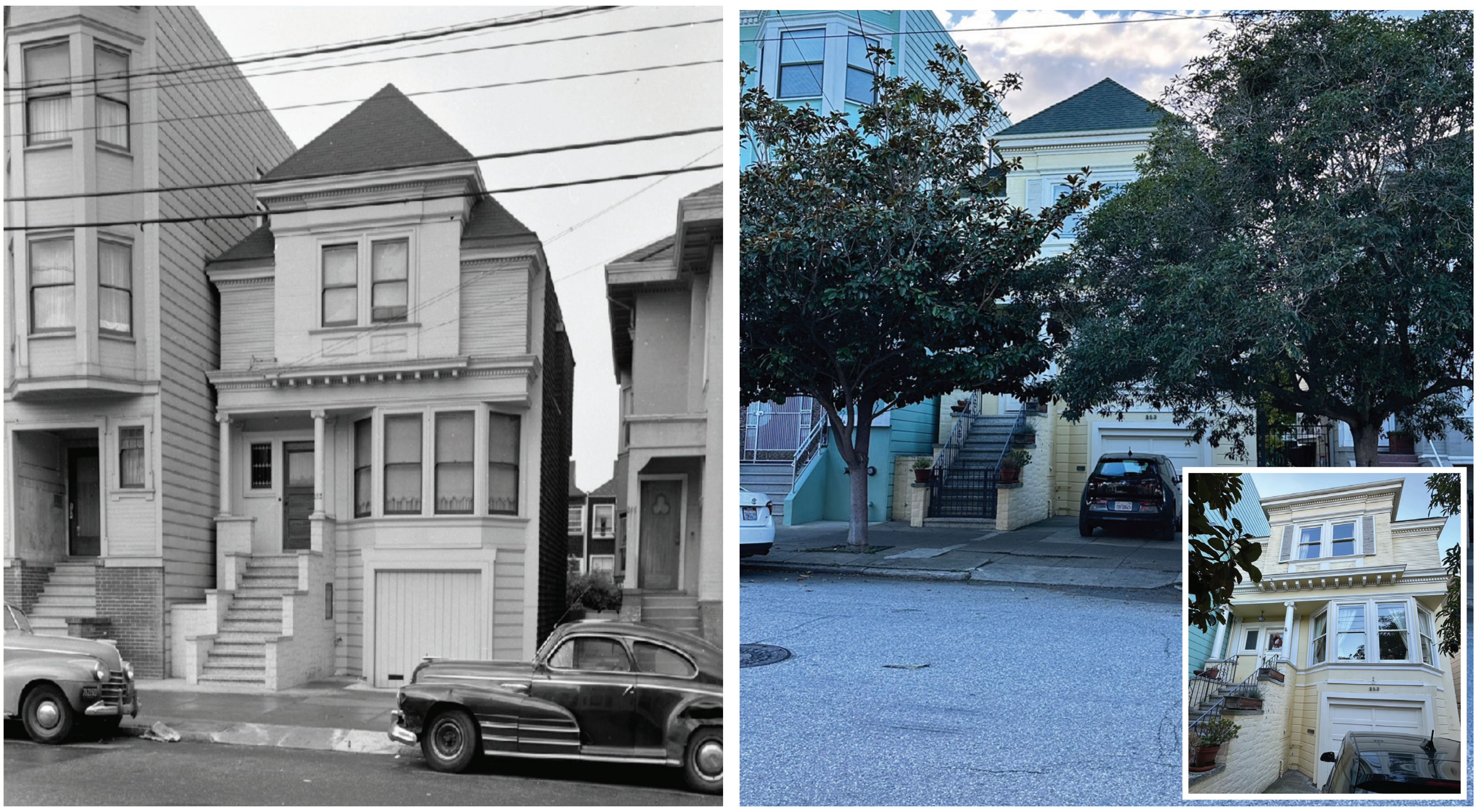
While these are the three community organizations I've found myself most involved with this past year, there are so many other great ways to stay active in the neighborhood. Longtime institutions, like the YMCA, Richmond Neighborhood Center, Golden Senior Center and Self-Help for the Elderly, are easy ways to get involved locally. There's even the new creative gathering space Friends & Neighbors on Sixth Avenue for young people looking to connect with the community. Although I can't list them all here, the Richmond District is full of organizations where individuals can be helpful.

So, I'm looking forward to 2024 with an eye on how else to help out around the Richmond. Civic pride is what I'm thankful for in 2023 where I've seen so many people get involved in and around the district.

Be it helping the environment, small businesses, social causes or just neighbors helping neighbors, I'm glad to live in such a robust community of people who take pride in rolling up their sleeves and making sure we are here for a better Richmond.

Brian Quan is a Richmond District native, co-leader of Grow the Richmond, president of the Chinese American Democratic Club, member of the Park Presidio-Sunset Lions Club and participant in monthly RefuseRefuse street clean-ups.

'Then and Now': 200 Block of Eighth Avenue



Left: It is time to revisit this single-family home on the 200 block of Eighth Avenue in the Inner Richmond. The house was built in 1904 – almost 120 years ago. This photo on the OpenSFHistory website was taken in 1951. *Photo courtesy of a private collector/Western Neighborhoods Project/OpenSFHistory.* Right: What a difference a couple of trees make. It would be fun to see the cool 1940s-era cars parked out front again. Inset: a closer view. *Photos taken on Nov. 28, 2023 by Michael Durand.*

OutsideLands.org
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Sensory-Friendly Movie

Continued from page 1

ing your child never having had the magical movie experience of watching an animated Walt Disney movie, ordering popcorn and drinks, and laughing with their friends at a movie theater. What is usually a rite of passage for most children is often not the reality of many families with members with disabilities because of their loved ones' atypical behaviors. This was the first time in a movie theater for some of the attendees.

Dalia Guimaraes and her daughter Bianca were among the attendees.

"Bianca has never been to a movie theater, she doesn't usually sit through movies, but she loves the inclusion program and the popcorn," Guimaraes said.

Jessica Huey, acting recreation coordinator, said funds were used from a grant the department was awarded to rent out the theater. In the future, Huey is interested in exploring an ongoing partnership with the Balboa Theater to keep hosting more sensory-friendly movies.

"The Balboa Theater was chosen because it was already an approved vendor with SF Rec. and Park and the theater was available for the date/time and for larger capacity," Huey said.

"We at CinemaSF are always excited to participate in neighborhood and community events, whether it's partnering with SF Rec. and Park, the YMCA, Western Neighborhoods Project, Surfrider Foundation or other groups we have partnered with in the past," said owner Adam Bergeron. "It is so wonderful to have these venues (The Balboa and 4 Star theaters) that the community can access for all forms of celebrations, fundraisers, memorials, birthdays and specialty groups."

Sensory-friendly events are becoming more popular. Last year, the American Conservatory Theater presented "A Christmas Carol" and the San Francisco Ballet performed "The Nutcracker" to the disability community. Both theaters have sensory-friendly events already planned for this holiday season.

Balboa Theater employee Chris Rama and General Manager Jody Washington expressed gratitude to have the chance to work the event. Rama, who moved to San Francisco from Las Vegas, wasn't aware of a disability community here in the City. Rama grew up with a cousin, now 23 years old, with Down Syndrome. They were very close. Rama showed interest in volunteering with the Therapeutic division upon being introduced to the disability community at the movie screening.

"The event was impactful for families who attended and facilitated a need," Washington said. "For them to feel comfortable and safe to enjoy a movie was great. Then to find out that for some of them it was their first time being able to do so made Chris and me feel honored to be part of the event."

Jinyou Hong and her mother Shan Hong attended the performance with their service dog. This was also Jinyou's first time at a movie theater. She had a positive experience watching "Strange World." There were moments that were challenging, some screaming, though Shan Hong is hoping for more inclusive movie experiences to make it more enjoyable for everyone.

"While Jinyou enjoys Disney movies like 'Inside Out' and 'Zootopia' at home, she tends to get excited and vocal during them. This is the reason we avoided movie theaters so far to avoid any disruptions for others." said Shan Hong.

Having this sensory-friendly performance, parents are able to relax more and not worry about their child ruining the event for other patrons at the theater.

Karen Wilsey brought her son Bennett to the private viewing and likes the idea of a sensory-friendly movie.

"Bennett has some habits of self-talk and pacing," Wilsey said.

Andy Phan attended the screening with his father An Phan. Phan said his son does well in movie theaters and he loves to sing along with Disney movies, though he is afraid of action movies. Andy also loves the idea of being with friends and watching the movie together.

"Andy can participate without worrying about other people not accepting him. When he makes a little bit of noise, people can't stand it," Phan said.

Runli Xu spoke on behalf of her daughter Arolyn Feng. Feng was the second person to show up and won a free popcorn and soda.

"It helps my daughter get a sense of friendship and socialization. We're working on her social skills," Xu said. For Xu, it is a worry-free event not having to be too concerned whether her daughter makes a noise that will bother others.

The event started at 10 a.m. in the theater lobby in a non-stress setting. The Balboa is a vintage movie theater with lots of memorabilia from Playland.

According to Jonathan Lee, recreation specialist, 13 families showed up with about 30 attendees. The attendees had time to socialize, order their items from the concession stand, and eat popcorn before entering the movie theater as a group at 10:45 a.m.

Once the whole group entered the theater, Huey thanked everyone for coming, thanked Lee for his diligence putting the event together. She encouraged the families to spread the word about family therapeutic day and reminded them about the accommodations offered at the sensory-friendly movie.

"I wanted to create a safe environment, a family-friendly movie, and provide a new experience for families to come together," Lee said.

A toddler explored up and down the aisles, there was some low-level talking, shouts of excitement, attendees getting up and down and pacing, which is all acceptable at a sensory-friendly movie.

Brian Pan, a volunteer at the event, is a physical education teacher at Phillip Burton High School. He is attending SF State's master program for Kinesiology. Pan liked the inclusion that was presented in "Strange World." The Disney movie shows acceptance and a diversity of characters through an interracial family, sexual orientation, relationships and the disability of the three-legged dog. For Pan, all of this is relatable to the diversity and acceptance he sees through the Therapeutic division.

The event ended off with a group photo outside the theater.

"The goal is to keep improving access to recreation/leisure activities for people with disabilities and families through our own programs, partnerships and collaborations," Huey said.

Learn more at sfrecpark.org/1249/Therapeutic-Recreation.

San Francisco Recreation and Park Department's Therapeutic Recreation and Inclusion Services division hosted its first sensory-friendly movie on Nov. 4 at the Balboa Theater in the Outer Richmond for children, teens and young adults and their families. After the program, they met out front and posed for a group photo. *Photo by Beth Lederer.*

The members of the Park-Presidio Sunset Lions Club have been serving our community for the past 75 years. We continue to do so despite the challenges of a pandemic. Soon, we will resume regular meetings and invite our west side neighbors to participate.

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City Hall

Supervisor Connie Chan

Working for the Richmond

I consider it a privilege to serve you. While it is often uncomfortable to confront the power of City Hall, as your district representative I will continue to fight for and demand resources for the Richmond, including increasing resources for public safety, building housing that people can afford and improving city service efficiency.

Fighting for Public Safety Resources

As your district representative and Board of Supervisors Budget Committee chair, I have had an opportunity to weigh in on funding for the police department and public safety in San Francisco. In each instance, I supported increases to funding, after doing my due diligence to ensure the funding was responsible and equitable.

For example, while I supported the mayor's proposed $25 million for police overtime, I made sure to understand the breakdown of costs and added accountability measures to track the department's use of overtime. The Budget Committee uncovered that the overtime increase was mainly spent on a safe-shopper program for downtown tourists instead of increasing beat patrols in our neighborhoods, leading me to demand a more equitable distribution of department resources and better real-time reporting of overtime use.

I also voted in support of a new contract with our police officers which included a 10% salary increase for the next three years and retention bonuses to keep our more experienced officers from leaving. During the budget process, I approved and supported the mayor's proposed budget that increased the police department's annual budget to $785 million, and included four police academy classes so that we can build back our department and rely less on overtime.

In addition, to ensure that our police force continues to focus on serious and violent crimes, I also supported the expansion of the Fire Department's Street Crisis Response Team which diverts more than 18,000 calls related to mental health crises from the police, freeing our officers to focus on what they do best.

After the murder of Yohannes "John" Tewolde at the Richmond Market, the mayor at long last answered my year-long demand to deploy retired police officers to patrol our neighborhood commercial corridors. The San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) retired police officer ambassadors will provide support to the Richmond District Police Station, adding patrol capacity to the Richmond. While we welcome the support from the SFPD ambassadors, it is not enough.

This is why I co-sponsored Supervisor Ahsha Safai's legislation to mandate foot and bike patrols by SFPD in all our neighborhoods. While the legislation was passed unanimously at the Board of Supervisors, it was disappointing to learn that the mayor returned the legislation unsigned without any indication for her plan to fulfill the patrolling mandate. This is why I will continue to do my job to demand the mayor allocate more resources for the public safety our neighbors need.

Our small businesses continue to face break-ins and other public safety issues, but without additional resources provided by the administration, we must be efficient with what we have. I convened a working group with Richmond Station Police Capt. Chris Canning and district merchants, including Balboa Village, the Geary Boulevard Merchants Association and the Clement Street Merchants Association, to identify issues and solutions specific to the needs of our district. Working together, we can build the community we need that will help us keep each other safe.

Legacy of Alexandria Theatre

In September, the owners of the Alexandria Theatre and I announced the first steps to bringing housing development to the iconic building while simultaneously preserving its history. Since I took office in 2021, my office has been working with the owners of the Alexandria, historic preservationists and city staff about options and ways to develop and improve the site. This fall, we announced the exploration of a development agreement, currently being negotiated between the Planning Department and building owners, that will guarantee housing with a specific number of affordable units on site and preserve the historical elements of the theater.

I want to thank our Richmond District neighbors for their patience and trust in our work to develop the Alexandria Theatre and preserve its history. After 20 years of sitting vacant, we are finally moving forward. With the commitment to community benefits and open dialogue with the theater owner, we now can take this monumental step to build much-needed housing in the Richmond while still honoring our history.

Support the Unhoused and Keep Our Streets Safe and Clean

Keeping our streets safe and clean is our top priority, and we can do this and still work to support our unhoused community. This is my office's guiding principle when we work with city departments, including the Street Crisis Response Team, to support those with mental illness and offer services to unhoused individuals. But keeping our streets safe and clean for everyone is a process, which is why we also work with city departments to keep our traffic medians safe for pedestrians, drivers and public transit riders alike. And when individuals pose public safety risks on our streets, we work with our law enforcement agencies to address these issues. This day-to-day work must be done to address situations as they occur. Some require immediate attention and specific solutions, while other situations call for sustained effort over time. My team and I are committed to do this hard work every day.

But we all know that the best way to solve homelessness on our streets is to prevent it from happening in the first place. We must continue our efforts to improve tenant protections and preserve affordable housing, including fully resourcing the Small Sites Program. This program allows the City to convert eligible buildings from rent control to permanently affordable housing, protecting tenants and preserving housing.

In her budget proposal, the mayor cut $20 million from the Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD), impacting the Small Sites Program, and another $5 million from a program supporting low-income residents living in San Francisco's Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels. I worked with housing advocates to identify more than $43 million in funding for Small Sites and restored $5 million in funding to the SRO Collaborative.

I will continue to demand accountability from our city departments in their contracts and services in tackling homelessness. I will also continue to advocate for regional strategies with our neighboring counties to tackle health treatments involving the homeless population, to share our resources, and to coordinate collectively with all our local healthcare systems. Our counties should also share resources and data to track regional homeless populations and services, including, but not limited to, coordinating shelter and healthcare facilities beyond city boundaries.

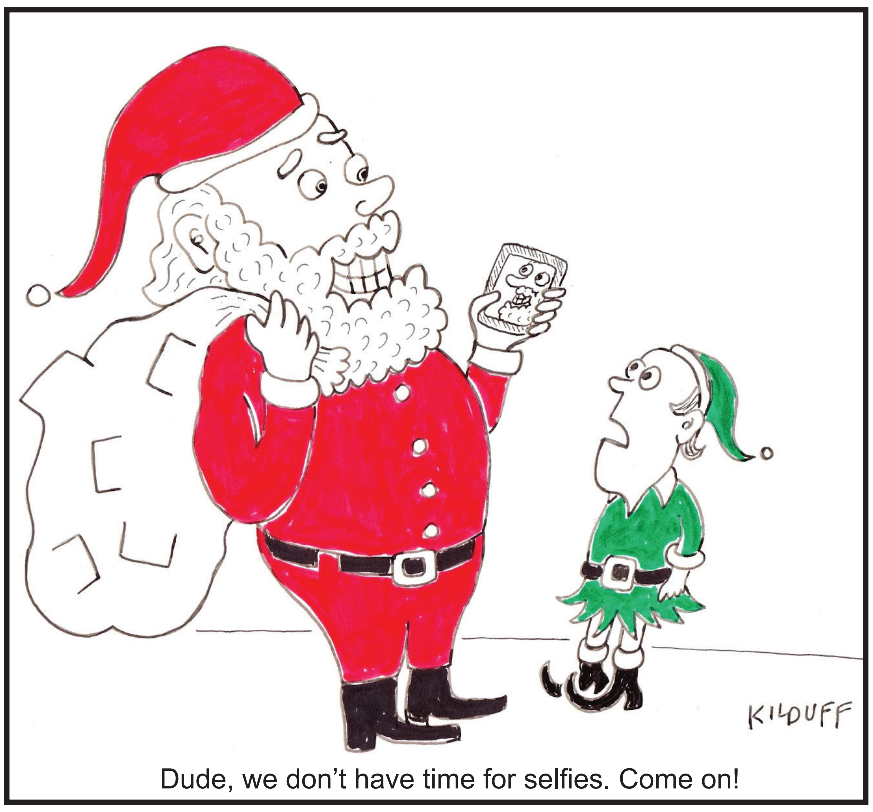
Continuing Through 2024

Clearly, so much more work needs to be done, and the Richmond needs an advocate to fight for resources and demand accountability, and I will continue to be that voice for the Richmond. We will not give up until the job gets done.

Connie Chan represents District 1 on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. She can be reached at 415-554-7410 or chanstaff@sfgov.org. Find an archive of her columns online at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Kilduff's Korner

By Paul Kilduff



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